



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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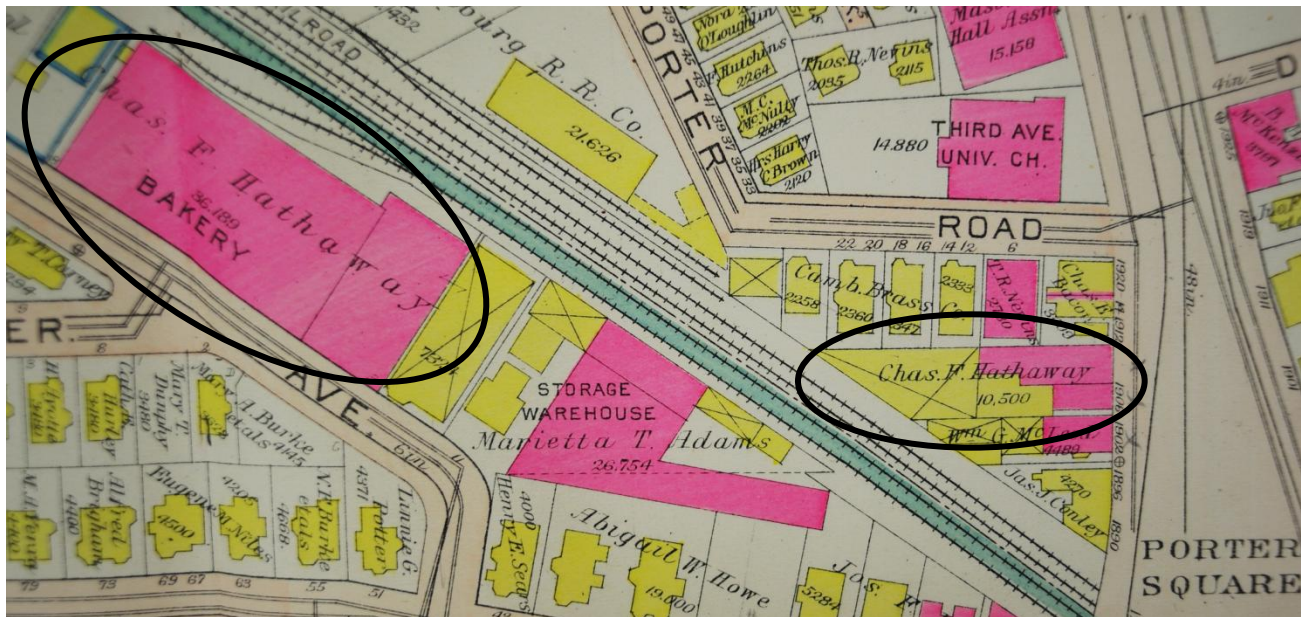
July 5, 2013

To: Members of the Historical Commission
From: Charles Sullivan, Executive Director
Re: D-1308: C.F. Hathaway & Sons Bakery, 33 Richdale Avenue

An application to demolish the former Hathaway Bakery at 33 Richdale Avenue was received on June 18. The applicant, Hathaway Partners LLC, was notified of an initial determination of significance, and a public hearing was scheduled for July 11.

Site Considerations

The Hathaway Bakery at 33 Richdale Avenue is located on the north side of Richdale Avenue between Upland Road and Walden Street, adjacent to the former Fitchburg Division of the Boston & Maine Railroad. It contains a single one-, two-, and three-story brick building on a 42,043 square foot lot. The site is located in a Residence C-1A district, in which all types of residences and some religious, educational, and health care uses are permitted. This district allows single to multi-family dwellings with a 1.25 FAR, a 45-foot height limit, and a density of 1,000 square feet per dwelling unit. The assessed value for the land and buildings (Map 178, Parcel 122), according to the current on-line real estate commitment list, is \$4,130,600, of which \$981,800 is attributable to the building.



Original (right) and new Hathaway bakeries, 1916

G. W. Bromley, Atlas of Cambridge, 1916

The Hathaway Bakery complex is the product of several building campaigns undertaken between 1910 and 1950. Both remaining buildings are of brick bearing wall construction with wood, steel,

and concrete structural systems.¹ The building at 33 Richdale is presently rented to a variety of tenants, and the spaces are used for offices, studios, storage, and light manufacturing. The building appears worn but serviceable; an appraisal made in 1944 found that it had been “greatly improved ... and modernized in every respect ... strong and durable, and will have a life of more than 50 years.” Interior conditions could not be determined.



Hathaway Bakery Complex from the southwest, including the 1938 garage (left)



Hathaway Bakery, 33 Richdale Avenue, 2013

CHC staff photo

The Hathaway bakery is one of several commercial and industrial complexes between Richdale Avenue and the railroad tracks. The former University Storage Warehouse near the corner of Upland Road has been adapted for condominiums, while the former Payne Elevator works just to the west is now occupied by artists' studios. Further west, beyond Walden Street, the site of a paper machinery factory and a pottery are now occupied by co-housing projects. The former Hathaway garage at 45 Richdale remains in use as a repair shop. The storage warehouse, bakery, garage, and elevator buildings are separated by parking lots and have zero setbacks from the sidewalks.

The adjoining neighborhood on Richdale, Upland Road, and Cambridge Terrace is entirely residential, with one-, two- and three-family houses at a higher elevation overlooking the Hathaway bakery and its neighbors. The neighborhood is very close to the Porter Square Shopping Center and Red Line station, but automobile traffic is moderate.

History

The Hathaway Bakery originated as the main plant of C.F. Hathaway & Sons, a local bakery in the late 19th century that evolved into a major regional supplier of bread and baked goods in the first half of the 20th. After the bakery closed about 1949 the complex was used by Arthur D. Little Inc. as a

¹ The 1938 Hathaway Bakery garage at 45 Richdale is no longer part of the 33 Richdale property and will not be affected by this proposal.

research laboratory, and then for manufacturing by the Beacon Wax Company. It has been owned by Artcraft Richdale Associates since 1973 and is used for a variety of purposes.

Charles F. Hathaway was born in Mechanic Falls, Maine in 1850 and learned the baking trade before arriving in Cambridge in 1869. He worked in increasingly responsible positions at local firms before establishing the “University City Bakery” and retail store at 1906 Massachusetts Avenue in 1880. He developed a recipe for bread that became widely popular and by 1899 owned several local bakeries and retail stores, with nine wagons covering wholesale routes from the Cambridge location, which could produce 4,000 loaves per day.

Hathaway expanded the original bakery several times but was unable to keep up with demand. In 1910, he and his four sons acquired an undeveloped site on Richdale Avenue and erected a new one-story brick bakery 215’ long and 110’ deep, with a railroad siding for fuel and raw material deliveries. The building was designed and erected by Benjamin Fox, Inc., a Boston architectural and



Hathaway’s “Luckiloaf” cost 5¢ in 1913 and was wrapped in waxed paper, an innovation at the time.



Most Hathaway bread was sold to markets, which advertised the product with signs such as this (illustrations from the internet).

engineering firm that was responsible for several Cambridge factories in this period. It featured 17 bays with three 12+12 double-hung sash to maximize daylight and six white-glazed ovens capable of producing 50,000 loaves per day. Four ovens elsewhere in the building produced cakes and pastries. The factory was notable for its refrigeration room, separation of coal furnaces from baking operations, and the quality of light and air available to workers.



Hathaway Bakery, 33 Richdale Avenue

Cambridge Chronicle, April 23, 1910

Demand for Hathaway products soon exceeded production, and in 1913 the building was extended 60’ toward the east to accommodate four or five additional ovens. By the time Charles Hathaway died in 1918 his four sons – Lester, Elmer, Alton, and Walter – were fully engaged in the business. The plant expanded again in 1919, when a second story was added over the westernmost ten bays of the original factory for additional manufacturing space and offices, and in 1938, when the garage at 45 Richdale was built to accommodate the firm’s delivery trucks. (The firm formerly had a stable at 15 Richdale, now demolished.)



Hathaway Bakery, 1913

CHC, Deeks Collection



Hathaway Bakery after addition of second floor, ca. 1932

Cambridge, Mass. *The Industrial City*



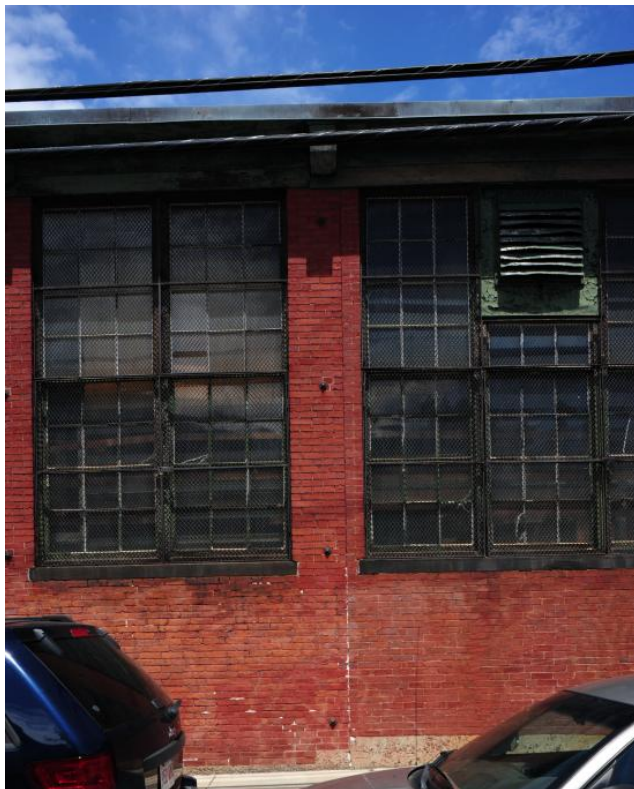
Original Hathaway building with 1919 second floor addition, 2013

CHC staff photo



Original Hathaway building with 1913 addition at right, 2013

CHC staff photos



Junction between 1910 and 1913 buildings



Rear elevation



Richdale Avenue elevation, 2013

CHC staff photo



Hathaway Delivery Trucks, ca. 1930 and 1950



Images from the internet

The Hathaway Baking Co., as the firm was styled after C.F. Hathaway's death, went public in 1928 when Hathaway Bakeries Inc. was formed to merge three firms with eleven plants in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York. The firm continued to expand, building a new bakery in Brighton in 1949 that supported 300 wholesale routes and operating plants in New Jersey and Ohio. However, the company stopped paying dividends in 1954 and in 1956 announced plans to liquidate its New England operations and sell the Brighton plant to Minneapolis-Honeywell.

Hathaway ended operations in Cambridge after opening the Brighton facility. In 1950 Arthur D. Little obtained a building permit to add a penthouse for "research purposes;" the company at that time still occupied its original headquarters on Memorial Drive and had not yet moved to Acorn Park off Route 2. The Beacon Wax Company acquired the facility from Hathaway in 1951 and occupied it until 1973, when Arthur Wolfson's Artcraft Richdale Associates bought it to house his family-owned business, the Winthrop Metal Products Corp. Surplus space was rented to a variety of tenants, including photographers, musicians, architects, and artisans of various kinds.

Hathaway Partners LLC purchased the building from Artcraft Richdale in 2013. They intend to raze all but seven bays along Richdale Avenue, one bay deep, and construct a 68,000 s.f. four-story building with 54 housing units. The site plan shows an elongated-U shape surrounding the remaining historic building, with landscaped setbacks on the west side and along the street. There would be an underground garage with 54 parking spaces accessed by a driveway at the east end of the site.

Significance and Recommendations

The Hathaway Bakery at 33 Richdale Avenue is significant for its architecture and method of construction, and for its associations with the industrial development of Cambridge in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a rare and distinctive example of a specialized early twentieth-century industrial structure. The building and its placement on the lot, and its relationship to the other surviving industrial buildings along Richdale Avenue, make an important architectural contribution to the streetscape of North Cambridge. I consider it eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as well as consideration for designation as a Cambridge landmark.

I consider the proposed retention of seven of the 22 bays of the Hathaway Bakery to be a minimal gesture toward preservation of a significant industrial structure. I recommend that the Commission find the building preferably preserved with regard to the proposed replacement project, and urge the owner to return with a more comprehensive proposal for adaptive reuse.